Welcome to the 5th edition of the New Directions bulletin. This bulletin focuses on the New Directions Learning Event hosted by Community Healthcare Dublin South, Kildare & West Wicklow (CHO 7) in November 2017.

**HSE Community Healthcare Dublin South, Kildare & West Wicklow New Directions Learning Event – “A Meaningful Life”**

The Learning Event was held in the Maldron Hotel, Tallaght and centred on the theme “A Meaningful Life”. This event provided an opportunity for learning and development for other day service providers, service users and other stakeholders. It also offered service providers a chance to demonstrate where they are on their journey on the New Directions Road to “A Meaningful Life”.

The road to New Directions
The event aimed to give the service providers within the Community Healthcare Area an opportunity to showcase how their services are reconfiguring in line with New Directions National Guidance Framework for day programmes of personal support services for adults with disabilities and their promotion of the core values of New Directions.

Morning and afternoon sessions were held in order to provide an opportunity for staff from various service providers to attend and to minimise disruption to service users.

Guests were invited to walk through the venue and view the various examples of New Directions in action taking place within the service providers (see right and below).

Materials at the stands reflected the core values and practical steps involved in implementing New Directions: Community Inclusion, Active Citizenship, Quality and Person Centredness.

A good example of a person-centred service demonstrated by a service provider was the development of a transitional support plan for school leavers with Autism and challenging behaviour, from an ABA school to an adult service. A transition coordinator spent one morning a week in the school with the students and staff with a view to observing and interacting with the school leavers in the school setting.

The transition coordinator was then able to gain a clear understanding of the approaches that were currently utilised. The transition coordinator met with families over the summer, introducing key workers to work with the school leaver and their family prior to commencing with the service. The support included accessing the community and visits to the new centre. The frequency and duration increased gradually in length and frequency as the start date for full support approached. This allowed a trusting relationship to build up between the support worker and the service use prior to accessing the service.
For the service users and their families and carers, this event exhibited the services being provided within the Community Healthcare Area with a focus on New Directions. The main objective being that service users can be better educated to seek out and consider similar services being provided in their own locality.

The service users were shown examples of Person Centred Planning, Community Inclusion and Active Citizenship taking place within the activities of the service providers.

Assistive Technology can play a vital role in enhancing the independence of service users. St. John of God Services demonstrated an app for service users, which facilitates straightforward communications using mobile devices.

The Continuum wall chart (left) display was successful in many ways. It was a very busy stand which encouraged attendees to network and share knowledge and ideas on what their service had implemented. It also allowed service users and their families to participate in a collaborative way with service providers, allowing them to share their experience and get information.

It was observed that this format allowed families to express their positive and negative experiences of service provision. There was conversation regarding new services that were developed that were successful and reasons why they worked. There were also conversations regarding what wasn’t working, identifying gaps in services.
Service providers in attendance observed the positive transformations that the service providers in the area had undertaken with the aim of assessing their own service.

Networking was another important objective of the event, particularly for service providers with the purpose of sharing their knowledge and experience of what has worked for them in implementing New Directions. The service providers also had the opportunity to discuss overcoming hurdles, transformative processes and to discover new and innovative services.

The service providers in attendance benefitted from opportunities to learn from and identify potential partnerships with other service providers.

The following service providers demonstrated their programmes and supports at the event:

- Camphill Communities of Ireland
- Cheeverstown
- Enable Ireland
- Gheel Autism Services
- Headway Ireland Services
- KARE
- Health Service Executive
- National Learning Network
- Nua Healthcare
- RehabCare
- St. John of God Hospitaller Ministries
- St. Michael’s House
- WALK
Attendees were asked a number of questions as part of the evaluation process. Based on a sample of the evaluation forms received, it was encouraging to see that 95% had heard of New Directions. Feedback in relation to the event was overwhelmingly positive, with all attendees rating the quality of the learning and the information presented at the stands, as either Good or Excellent and 94% of attendees rating information in relation to New Directions as Good or Excellent.

Attendees were also asked to assess the training requirements for staff going forward to improve the implementation of New Directions. Disabilities and Awareness were deemed to be of the greatest importance followed by Support Networks, Community Inclusion, Social Inclusion and Supported Employment.

Ms. Carol Cuffe, Head of Social Care for Community Healthcare Dublin South, Kildare & West Wicklow, who attended the event, expressed her thanks to Louise Casey, HSE Training and Guidance Service and to the New Directions Implementation Team for organising the event. Ms. Cuffe also acknowledged the work the service providers had put into their information stands and expressed her confidence that the event would enable all service users, their families, staff and service providers to identify and map their progression on their New Directions journey.
For further information

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